



## Housatonic Valley Association

150 Kent Road  
P.O. Box 28  
Cornwall Bridge, CT 06754  
860-672-6678

1383 Pleasant Street  
P.O. Box 251  
South Lee, MA 01260  
413-394-9796

19 Furnace Bank Road  
P.O. Box 315  
Wassaic, NY 12592  
845-789-1381

[www.hvatoday.org](http://www.hvatoday.org)



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### **Testimony in opposition to SB1148: AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN KILLING AND HUNTING OF BLACK BEAR AND PROHIBITING BIRD FEEDERS AND OTHER UNINTENTIONAL AND INTENTIONAL FEEDING OF POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS ANIMALS**

To the Honorable Co-chairs Senator Lopez and Representative Gresko, the Honorable Vice-Chairs Senator Hochadel and Representative Palm, the Honorable Ranking Members Senator Harding and Representative Callahan, and the members of the Joint Environment Committee;

The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA), the regional watershed organization and accredited land trust serving 55 Connecticut towns and cities, is grateful for the opportunity to submit written testimony **in opposition to SB1148: AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN KILLING AND HUNTING OF BLACK BEAR AND PROHIBITING BIRD FEEDERS AND OTHER UNINTENTIONAL AND INTENTIONAL FEEDING OF POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS ANIMALS**

The Purpose of this legislation is “to establish permits for the taking of bear that damage crops, livestock or bees, authorize the killing of bears that cause harm to a person or pet or that enter an occupied building, provide for an annual bear hunt season in Litchfield County by lottery and prohibit the intentional and unintentional feeding of potentially dangerous animals.” While its public safety intention is laudable, the bill is encumbered by numerous provisions only indirectly to “dangerous wildlife”.

Farmers already have mechanisms under law to address bear damage to crops, and DEEP already has the ability to destroy bears that have become too habituated to humans and pose a likely threat to public safety. We do not need a bear hunting season in Litchfield County. New Jersey has a massive bear hunting season and it has done nothing to make its citizens safer or reduce bear damage to crops.

We do need to better adapt our communities to the reality that we live alongside a growing bear population. We need “Bear Smart” communities, with programs and resources that provide information about how to make our residences and businesses less attractive to bears. Zoning Ordinances, affordable bear resistant trash containers, seasonal limitations on bird feeds, and public education are all necessary and needed parts of reducing the likelihood of human/near conflict. This bill only tangentially addresses “feeding dangerous animals.”

HVA urges the Committee to vote against SB1148 and to take up legislation that will make our communities more resilient and adaptable to living with wildlife. Even bears.

Respectfully Yours,

Tim Abbott,  
Regional Land Conservation Director